

STATE SENATOR . MICHAEL PRUSI . 38TH DISTRICT

Prusi Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, December 2, 2004

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PRUSI WORKS WITH COLLEAGUES TO REACH COMPROMISE ON JUDGES

Appropriations bill to include full-time judges for Western U.P. Counties

LANSING – An agreement reached between State Senator Mike Prusi (D-Ishpeming) and Senate leadership to include full-time probate judges for Baraga, Iron, and Ontonagon Counties passed the Chamber today. Currently, the probate judges in these counties are part-time; the counties must pay the majority of the judges' salary and benefits. Under the compromise, the state will pay their full salary and benefits. By creating these full-time judgeships, the legislature is helping to alleviate an increasing caseload on an already busy system.

"I am pleased that my colleagues realize how important these judges are to the people in the Western U.P.," Senator Prusi said. "The increasing case load and financial burden put on the counties compromise a timely, effective court."

Effective January 2, 2007, Senate Bill 823 will convert nine probate judges from around the state to full-time status. Other counties benefiting from the compromise include Alcona, Benzie, Missaukee, Montmorency, Oscoda, and Presque Isle. Effective immediately, the compromise will also allow the 5-year demonstration project, established in 1999, in Iron County to continue providing vital services.

"I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House to ensure passage of this bill," said Senator Prusi. "The people of the Western U.P. will greatly benefit from this legislation."

In addition to local input, the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) has recommended this course of action for all nine counties. SB 823 still needs approval from the State House before it can go to the governor's desk.

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Mike Prusi serves as Democratic Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. He represents the 38th Senate District, which includes all Upper Peninsula counties west of Luce County.